

Israel applauds Obama Administration's push for a vehicle exchange program that supports energy efficiency ***Israel applauds Obama Administration's push for a vehicle exchange program that supports energy efficiency***

Washington, DC – Wednesday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – NY) applauded the Obama Administration's commitment to helping drivers modernize their vehicles. The Obama Administration is supporting a vehicle turn-in program to get drivers into energy efficient vehicles. Reps. Israel and Jay Inslee (D – WA), co-chairs of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, introduced legislation in the House of Representatives in January to create a "Cash for Clunkers" auto exchange program. The Israel-Inslee bill is supported by energy and environment advocates, and has a companion bill in the Senate, sponsored by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D – CA).

"Our country is facing two threats right now that can be solved with one solution. First, the threat created by our dependence on foreign oil. And second, the threat of losing our national auto industry. My 'Cash for Clunkers' bill gives drivers an incentive to upgrade to a more fuel-efficient vehicle and spurs demand for new cars. We need to give the auto industry a jump start, and my bill will do just that. I'm pleased the Obama Administration has expressed support for this program and I look forward to working with them to get it done," said Rep. Israel.

"Our bill will stimulate the purchase of fuel efficient cars that Americans want to buy," said Rep. Inslee. "Our approach will help families and small business owners save money on gas costs, while stimulating the economy with increased vehicle purchases. For the sake of our energy security and environment, our national fleet must become fuel efficient as soon as possible. This bill gives families and businesses the incentive to make the jump to money-saving, fuel efficient cars."

The Israel-Inslee bill, the Accelerated Retirement of Inefficient Vehicles Act (ARIVA) of 2009 (H.R.520), establishes a federal incentive for the voluntary retirement of fuel-inefficient vehicles from the current pool of about 235 million cars and light trucks registered to private and commercial owners in the United States. It is intended to operate for four years, 2009-2012, and to incentivize the early retirement of up to one million vehicles per year. The legislation provides consumers with vouchers valued between \$2000 and \$4,500 which can be used towards the purchase of a newer, more fuel efficient vehicle or toward public transit fare.

"Such fleet modernization programs, which provide a generous credit to consumers who turn in old, less fuel efficient cars and purchase cleaner cars have been successful in boosting auto sales in a number of European countries," President Obama said earlier this week.

Reps. Israel and Inslee's ARIVA legislation is supported by a number of energy and environment groups including the Natural Resources Defense Council, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Sierra Club, the Safe Climate Campaign, 2020 Vision and SmartTransportation.org.

"This bill will help the auto industry sell vehicles, while helping achieve important goals of

saving oil and curbing global warming," said Ann Mesnikoff of the Sierra Club.

"The Israel-Inslee bill shows how we can rebuild the economy while protecting the environment," said Dan Becker, Director of the Safe Climate Campaign.

"We applaud President Obama for taking a systematic approach to rebuilding the auto industry. Accelerated retirement of vehicles with an incentive to purchase a high-efficiency car is a proven method to both boost auto sales as well as help reduce our oil dependence," said Jack D. Hidary, Chairman of SmartTransportation.org, an advocate of innovative transport solutions. "We encourage the administration to look to the provisions of H.R. 520 and the leadership of Congressmen Israel, Inslee and others who have put together a balanced program to help America improve its fleet and spur the economy."

"The new, higher CAFE standards will take a while to kick in, and in the meantime a scrappage program like this one can help get the gas guzzlers off the road. Fuel economy standards, unlike standards for emissions of criteria air pollutants, have been pretty much flat for twenty years, so the ARIVA bill properly targets gas guzzlers, not just old vehicles," said Therese Langer of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, "ARIVA brings real environmental benefits while contributing to the recovery of the auto industry and its transition toward more viable product lines."

A preliminary analysis prepared by the Auto Futures Group found that this legislation will have a significant economic stimulus impact on the auto industry and serve as a jobs creator. The analysis suggests that 225,000 US auto sector jobs would be created for every one million cars scrapped in the program, including jobs in auto plants, administration, parts supply, marketing, sales, finance and research and development.

Rep. Israel serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water. Rep. Inslee serves on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.